DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 379 743 EA 026 471

AUTHOR	Haynes, Charles C., Ed.
TITLE	Finding Common Ground: A First Amendment Guide to Religion and Public Education.
INSTITUTION	Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville, TN. Freedom Forum First Amendment Center.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	181p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, 1207 18th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212 (Publication No. 94-F09, $9.50 prepaid).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Conflict Resolution; *Constitutional Law; Controversial Issues (Course Content); Court Litigation; Elementary Secondary Education; Legal Problems; Public Schools; *Religion Studies; *Religious Conflict; Religious Differences; *State Church Separation

ABSTRACT

This guidebook is built on the conviction that finding common ground on many divisive issues is possible within the civic framework provided by the Religious Liberty clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It argues that there is a clearly defined constitutional difference between "teaching religion" to students and "teaching about religion" to students. The book offers a new approach to conflicts over values and religion in the public schools, an approach rooted in the civic agreement shared by citizens across their differences. Following the introduction, chapter 2 contains a summary of the 1988 Williamsburg Charter, which reaffirms the importance of the First Amendment religious-liberty principles--rights, responsibilities, and respect. Chapter 3 provides a historical overview of religious liberty in American life, the contemporary perspective, and the new challenges of exploding pluralism. The fourth chapter examines the relationships among the Supreme Court, religion, and public education, with a focus on the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. Chapter 5 outlines strategies for building common ground, based on the civic framework provided by the First Amendment. Questions and answers about the role of religion in the public school curriculum are offered in the sixth chapter. Chapter 7 provides a rationale and guidelines for teaching about religion. Chapters 8 and 9 offer resources for teaching about religion in U.S. history and world history. Guidelines for dealing with various religious holidays in the public schools are provided in the 10th chapter. Chapter 11 contains questions and answers about equal access and the public schools, and chapter 12 outlines resources and strategies for translating an interest in character education into a plan of action. Appendices contain a copy of the Williamsburg Charter and samples of school district policies. (LMI)